(d) whether it would not be possible to view the programmes on different channels without set-top box; and

(e) whether consumers will have to spend additional amount for the pay channel even after the said system?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (e) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) become the 'Regulator' for broadcasting and cable services in January, 2004. It has been entrusted with additional functions to make recommendations regarding the parameters for regulating maximum time for advertisements in pay as well as other channels and the terms and conditions on which the "addressable systems" shall be provided to customers. Besides, TRAI is also to specify the standard norms for, and periodicity of, revision of rates of pay channels, including interim measures. Based on the interim recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the implementation of Conditional Access System (CAS) has been suspended by the Government, until further orders, through the issue of a notification on 27th February, 2004. TRAI is currently examining the various issues concerning the implementation of 'Conditional Access System'. After their final recommendations are received, appropriate decision would be taken. The implementation of CAS would be beneficial to the consumers since they will have the choice to pay for only those pay channels which they choose to watch. The Set Top Box (STB) will be required only for viewing of programmes through pay channels and not for Free-to-Air (FTA) channels. The Government has specified Rs. 72/- (plus local taxes) as the maximum price of basic service tier, consisting of not less than thirty FTA channels of different genres of entertainment, news, sports, children's programmes and music. Additional FTA channels would also be made available to the subscribers within the said maximum amount.

Implementation of C.A.S.

1265. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's policy on CAS, whether there is a proposal

to revive it, amend it or scrap it;

(b) as most of the channels are charging exorbitant fee and at the same time earning millions from advertisement, what is Government's policy towards these channels; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to protect the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India [TRAI] became the 'Regulator' for broadcasting and cable services in January, 2004. It has been entrusted with additional functions to make recommendations regarding the parameters for regulating maximum time to advertisements in pay as well as other channels and the terms and conditions on which the "addressable systems" shall be provided to customers. Besides, TRAI is also to specify the standard norms for, and periodicity of, revision of rates of pay channels, including interim measures. TRAI is currently examining the various issues concerning the implementation of 'Conditional Access System'. After their final recommendations are received, appropriate decision would be taken.

Ban on video piracy

1266. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to bring a law banning video piracy and whether any representation has been received from the Film Industry;

(b) how may cases of video piracy have been reported in the year 2003-04; and

(c) what is the estimated loss to the industry per year due to the pirated video cassettes and discs?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Under the Copyright Act, 1957, which falls under the-purview of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, infringement of copyright is a cognizable offence. The Government, from time to time, receives representations from the film industry, regarding the need for strict action against piracy.